

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, PASCHALVILLE BRANCH
6942 Woodlands Avenue
Philadelphia
Philadelphia
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6761
PA-6761

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, PASCHALVILLE BRANCH

HABS No. PA-6761

Location: 6942 Woodland Ave (at 70th Street), Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: City of Philadelphia

Present Occupant: Free Library of Philadelphia

Present Use: Paschalville Branch library

Significance: Paschalville was one of twenty-five branch libraries constructed between 1904 and 1930 for the Free Library of Philadelphia using a \$1.5 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Andrew Carnegie's public library construction grants were a major impetus to the growth of these institutions throughout the country. Philadelphia was second only to New York City in the size of the Carnegie grant and number of branch libraries constructed. Each jurisdiction receiving Carnegie library funds was responsible for providing a site and operating expenses equal to ten percent of the cost of construction. Prior to receiving the Carnegie funds in 1903, branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia (founded 1891) were housed in a variety of preexisting structures. The Carnegie library construction campaign provided twenty-five purpose-built branch libraries for the City of Philadelphia, each designed within the ideal of efficient operation and using fashionable, if conservative, architectural forms and motifs.

Paschalville was the seventeenth Carnegie branch library opened by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Plans for the structure were approved by the Free Library Board of Trustees Carnegie Fund Committee on April 4, 1913 and the branch opened to the public on April 20, 1915. The Paschalville Branch was designed by architect Henry C. Richards.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of erection: 1913-15, opened April 20, 1915
2. Architect: Henry C. Richards
3. Original and subsequent owners/uses:
Free Library of Philadelphia branch library, 1915 to present
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Harry H. Wehmeyer, General Contractor¹
5. Original plans and construction: Henry C. Richard's plans for the Paschalville branch were approved by the Free Library on April 4, 1913 and construction proceeded during 1913-15. Architectural drawings have not been located.
6. Alterations and additions: The library retains its original appearance on the main façade. The basic interior space and some historic features of the original main reading room are still intact.

B. Historical Context:

In the nineteenth century most libraries in the United States were private or available only to subscribers. Starting in the late nineteenth century, many cities began to found "free library" systems with the goal of providing educational material and services to a wider array of citizens, particularly the burgeoning immigrant population. The Free Library of Philadelphia was founded in 1891 and proceeded to establish a central library and a network of neighborhood branches. Despite ambitious goals, however, these libraries remained rather modest affairs housed in rented space and utilizing mainly donated collections and volunteer staffing.

During this same period the library construction philanthropy of wealthy industrialist Andrew Carnegie would have a profound effect on both the development of professional library standards and the evolution of the building type. The Free Library of Philadelphia received a \$1.5 million grant in January 1903 from Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation to build thirty branch libraries.² Carnegie had been engaged in library building philanthropy since 1886, but the program was expanded to jurisdictions outside of his personal and business sphere only in 1898. Carnegie library historian George Bobinski calls this later period the "wholesale phase" of Carnegie's library philanthropy. From 1898 to 1919, he gave over \$39 million to 1,406 communities. The

¹ "Library Branch Will Be Built," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 July 1913, 11.

² While the original grant stipulated funding for 30 libraries at \$50,000 each, rising construction costs caused the number to be scaled back in 1918. For the remaining branches, the Carnegie fund provided only part of the construction cost with the city or neighborhood groups making up the difference. See letter from Librarian John Ashhurst to James Bertram, Secretary, Carnegie Corporation officially changing the total number of Carnegie branches to "25 or 26," (11 October 1918), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

unprecedented scale of this effort contrasts with the “retail phase” between 1886 and 1898 when Carnegie donated \$1.8 million to six communities.³ The \$1.5 million gift to Philadelphia’s fledgling free library system was quite generous. Only New York City, which received a \$5.2 million grant for sixty-six libraries in 1899, built more branches using Carnegie funds. The next largest grants went to Baltimore and Cleveland; each city built fourteen libraries.⁴

In Philadelphia there was a delay while the various government agencies worked out a mechanism to legally accept and administer such unprecedented largesse. According to Bobinski, “the Pennsylvania State legislature had to approve an act authorizing the Philadelphia city council to enter into contracts with the trustees of the public library so that the arrangements necessary for receiving the Carnegie gift could be carried into effect.”⁵ After a year of bureaucratic maneuvering, the state legislature finally passed the law enabling the city to officially accept the gift. The final step before the Free Library could proceed was an ordinance approving this arrangement passed by Mayor John Weaver in January 1904. John Thomson quickly sent a letter to James Bertram, Carnegie’s personal secretary and gatekeeper for the library philanthropy program, expressing his relief that the Free Library could move forward with branch construction:

I have the pleasure of informing you that I have this morning received from the Clerk of Councils official notice that the Mayor has signed the Ordinance accepting Mr. Carnegie’s splendid gift to the City of Philadelphia. The matter has been one of great anxiety. . . . Arrangements are on foot to accept 4 or 5 sites and it is hoped that the preliminary arrangements for locating the system of Branch Libraries, made possible by Mr. Carnegie’s munificence, will be put in active motion at once. . . . I think we shall be able very rapidly to show our appreciation of what Mr. Carnegie has put it in our power to do.⁶

The year-long delay in officially accepting the gift gave the Free Library time to quietly prepare to construct new branch buildings and move rapidly once approval came. Carnegie did not specify architectural designs or review plans at this time, but he did express a strong preference that the branch libraries include lecture rooms.⁷ In a letter officially accepting Carnegie’s gift, Free Library Board of Trustees President Joseph G.

³ George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development*, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), 13-14.

⁴ Bobinski 229, 231.

⁵ Bobinski 44.

⁶ Letter, John Thomson to James Bertram (13 January 1904), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁷ “Carnegie Offers \$1,500,000 to City,” *Philadelphia Times*, 7 January 1903, clipping in Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

Rosengarten noted that the Trustees “concur[red] fully” with his lecture room suggestion and planned to expand the already successful Free Library lecture program.⁸

Beyond a general desire for new branch buildings and an interest in including lecture rooms, it is not clear what guidelines or models informed the Free Library as they developed a fairly consistent branch library plan for their city. When Philadelphia received its Carnegie grant in 1903 there was no official design review by Carnegie or his staff. By 1908 Carnegie’s secretary James Bertram had to approve the building plans for all new grants. The Carnegie publication “Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings” [sic.] was first issued in 1911 by Bertram.⁹ Bertram was largely motivated by a distaste for what he viewed as wasteful features or extravagant designs that went over budget. He advocated prioritizing the needs of librarians over the opinions of architects. While the Philadelphia branch library plans progressed independent of Carnegie design oversight, it appears both were developing simultaneously and in harmony with the latest precepts in library planning for open stack branch libraries. The HABS research on the Carnegie branches in Philadelphia showed that the Paschalville branch was rectangular version of the open plan library form as developed by the Free Library.

The Board of Trustees of the Free Library formed a Carnegie Fund Committee in March 1904 to oversee the details of this ambitious branch building effort. In response to a request from the Carnegie Fund Committee for instructions on how to select architects, the Board of Trustees implemented an ad hoc system. They sought to avoid the expense and complication of holding competitions so instead proposed to appoint an architect as branch sites were chosen. Selection seems to have been based on reputation and personal contacts, with some architects asking to be considered as work on the branches proceeded. The written record is thin on this point, but it seems apparent librarian John Thomson and assistant librarian John Ashhurst were instrumental in this process. John Thomson served as secretary of the Carnegie Fund Committee and the Free Library’s leading staff member on all matters. Ashhurst’s assistant librarian position was specifically created by the Board of Trustees “in order to undertake part of the very heavy extra work that would now be involved in carrying out the Andrew Carnegie Branch Library Building scheme.”¹⁰

In the interest of moving quickly to open new branch buildings, projects on donated or city-owned property typically were launched first. Later branches would be built on a mix of donated and purchased sites to ensure even distribution across the city. In the 1908 *Annual Report*, Free Library of Philadelphia Board of Trustees President J. G. Rosengarten wrote:

⁸ Letter, J. G. Rosengarten to Andrew Carnegie, (5 March 1904), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁹ Abigail Van Slyck. *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 35-36.

¹⁰ Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, (12 February 1904).

The steady increase of Branch Library building shows that the value of the Carnegie fund is appreciated by those who have made generous gifts of land to the city, on which new Branch library buildings were erected with the fund generously provided by Mr. Carnegie. There still remain large sections of the city, notably the southeast, south, southwest and west wards, in need of libraries.¹¹

After construction of the approximately the first dozen branch libraries on donated or already city-owned property, the Free Library moved to acquire library sites in underserved areas. This productive period of branch library construction focused on addressing the shortage of Carnegie branches in the southern and western parts of the city. In the 1911 *Annual Report*, all six new branches mentioned as in progress were located in these areas – Southwark, Falls of Schuylkill, South Philadelphia, Passyunk, Paschalville, and Haddington.¹²

The somewhat isolated working class neighborhood of Paschalville in southwestern Philadelphia was a prime example of an area in need of branch library services. The village of Paschalville was formally established in 1810 on the site of a seventeenth century settlement in Kingsessing Township, one of the thirteen original townships that make up present-day Philadelphia.¹³ By the late nineteenth century many industrial complexes had grown up in Paschalville and neighboring Elmwood around the railroad lines that approached Philadelphia from the south, including the Fels Naptha Soap Company and the Brill Company, a rail car manufacturer.¹⁴ Working class neighborhoods housing many recent immigrants developed in close proximity to these places of employment.

A Paschalville branch of the Free Library was first established in March 1900 and located in the ground floor of a house at the corner of 70th Street and Woodland Avenue. Apparently the library received use of the space rent free and the rest of the building would be occupied by the “Progressive Association.” The modest rooms were filled with a circulating collection of approximately 2500 volumes.¹⁵ Woodland Avenue was the major thoroughfare in this section of the city and this intersection would be the subsequent location of the purpose-built Carnegie library. Maurice Fels of the Fels Naptha Soap Company was instrumental in these efforts. The Fels Company had established their plant in the community at 73rd Street and Island Avenue around 1895.

¹¹ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Thirteenth Annual Report* (1908), 9. The President’s Letter included in this volume was dated January 1909.

¹² Free Library of Philadelphia, *Sixteenth Annual Report* (1911), 3. The President’s Letter included in this volume was dated June 1912. The letter also mentioned planning for a branch at 49th and Chester that was never constructed.

¹³ History of the Paschalville Branch on the Free Library website at www.freelibrary.org/branches/history.cfm?loc=PAC

¹⁴ Information about the Fels Naptha plant and the industrial character of southwest Philadelphia was accessed at www.workshopoftheworld.com, a project of the Oliver Evans Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA).

¹⁵ “The Free Library of Philadelphia,” *Public Libraries* 5, no. 4 (April 1900): 176.

The middle child of the three Fels brothers, Maurice Fels (1857-1952) studied law and became “a major force in local immigrant education” just as the city was experiencing an influx of Eastern Europeans.¹⁶ (Rosen 63)

By 1906, the Free Library *Annual Report* noted that the Paschalville Branch was in want of a “modern up to date convenient branch building.”¹⁷ The report mentioned the possibility of using the Carnegie funding if a local industrialist could donate a site. Apparently no site donation was forthcoming because in 1911 the city prepared to purchase the site at 70th Street and Woodland Avenue which was to be sold at public auction. The city council ordinance signed by Mayor John E. Reyburn on May 4, 1911 called for purchase of the land by condemnation. John Thomson briefly described the process in his portion of 1911 *Annual Report*:

It did not seem that there was any other piece of land in the immediate neighborhood which would be equally available as the site for a Paschalville Branch. . . . The residents of the neighborhood have been very much interested in the matter, and negotiations are on foot by which the Library will be able to escape the interruption and annoyance which would be caused by closing it during the destruction of the present and erection of the proposed new building.¹⁸

Thomson’s concern with disrupting branch operation during demolition and construction indicates that the new Carnegie building would occupy the same site as the existing library. Minutes from the April 12, 1912 meeting of the Carnegie Fund Committee record an offer from the Rector of St. James Kingsessing Church to provide temporary quarters for the branch library during construction of the new building.¹⁹ Thomson must be referring to this arrangement since his section of the *Annual Report* was dated June 1912. Perhaps some of the hesitation about this site is due to its narrow frontage on Woodland Avenue; the library would have to face the secondary 70th Street. Also, because the site was long and narrow the customary T-plan branch form was modified into a single long rectangle.

Plans for the new Paschalville library were moving forward briskly in the spring of 1912. The Board of Trustees meeting on April 12th included a “report made as to steps taken in the matter of erecting a new library building at Paschalville in place of the present building.”²⁰ The matter was referred to the Carnegie Fund Committee, “with power.” The minutes of this meeting also noted the appointment of Mr. Henry C. Richards of City Hall as architect for this branch. On May 17th, the Carnegie Fund Committee directed Thomson to formally request \$50,000 of the fund from Carnegie

¹⁶ Evelyn Bodek Rosen, *The Philadelphia Fels, 1880-1920: A Social Portrait*. (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), 63.

¹⁷ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Eleventh Annual Report* (1906), 27.

¹⁸ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Sixteenth Annual Report* (1911), 19.

¹⁹ Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes (12 April 1912), 18.

²⁰ Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes (12 April 1912), 216.

Corporation treasurer R. A. Franks.²¹ Also at the May meeting Richards was instructed to prepare plans for the new Paschalville Branch, to be approved when agreed upon Edmunds, Thomson, Ashhurst, and the architect.²²

Henry Richards seems to be the least known of the various architects chosen to design Philadelphia branch libraries. As early as 1904 the Carnegie Fund Committee minutes note that “at the suggestion of the Mayor. . . Mr. Richards, of the firm of Wilson Brothers and Richards, should be engaged as one of the architects . . . and the Committee approved of their being appointed.”²³ Presumably this is the same “Henry C. Richards of City Hall” later appointed to design the Paschalville Branch. The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia had no biographical information for the H. C. Richards associated with a listing for this branch library.²⁴ There is a Henry DeCoursey Richards listed as active during this period, mainly as a designer of schools and chief draftsman for the Philadelphia Board of Public Education (from 1906-1919). In spite of the different middle initial, his connection to a city agency could mean that Henry DeCoursey Richards is also the Henry C. Richards who designed the Paschalville Branch.

In July 1912 the Free Library Board of Trustees considered Richards’ plans for the Paschalville Branch. Their resolution generally approved the design and transferred the power to direct any changes to Thomson and Ashhurst. The librarians were also to instruct the architect to ask for bids at the appropriate time.²⁵ The next mention of the Paschalville library plans is not until an April 1913 Carnegie Fund Committee meeting when the plans were again approved.²⁶ It is not clear whether the delay was caused by a design revision process or a simple administrative backlog due the multiple branch projects underway at this time. Perhaps the mention of possible alterations was just standard language because the new branch construction process was moving forward. Board of Trustees President Henry Edmunds noted in his *Annual Report* letter dated June 1913 that library hoped to break ground shortly at both Paschalville and Haddington.²⁷

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported on July 22, 1913 that the permits had been issued for construction of the new Paschalville Branch, and provided a few details regarding the planned structure:

A permit for the erection of the new Paschallville [sic.] branch of the Philadelphia Free Library was yesterday issued to Harry H. Wehmeyer, who has the contract for thus, the latest addition to the string of public

²¹ Resolution, Henry Edmunds, President of Carnegie Fund Committee, (17 May 1912), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

²² Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes (17 May 1912), 20.

²³ Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes (9 September 1904).

²⁴ See www.philadelphiabuilding.org.

²⁵ Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes (25 July 1912), 236.

²⁶ Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes (4 April 1913), 39.

²⁷ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Seventeenth Annual Report* (1912), 3

reading rooms in this city. The new building, to be constructed of brick, one story in height, and measure 54 feet by 84 feet, will be erected at a cost of approximately \$40,000. . . . When completed it will replace the old home of the Paschallville branch at 68th Street and Woodland Avenue. Ground will be broken immediately, and the work rushed, in order that the library will be finished before winter sets in.²⁸

The prediction that the library would be completed by that winter was rather optimistic. In Henry Edmunds' "Letter from the President" in the 1913 *Free Library Annual Report*, dated June 1914, Paschalville was described as close to opening.²⁹ It is not known exactly when construction was completed, but the Paschalville Branch was not dedicated and officially opened until April 20, 1915. The final cost of construction was \$52,095.³⁰

The William Rau photographs of the Paschalville Branch published in the 1914 *Free Library Annual Report* show the symmetrical Georgian Revival brick library in a closely developed urban neighborhood. This branch sits on a low raised basement and the main entrance is only a few low steps from the side walk. The row house shown close to southeast rear corner of the library is still extant. A group of women and children stand on the low entrance stoop and on the front sidewalk. For the interior view, the large and open library space has four female librarians seated at the central desk. A young male patron is shown reading at one of the tables in the foreground while some other patrons sit in the far background. The single long rectangular space of this branch was architecturally demarcated into three areas by a large cased opening with pocket doors at one side of the central area and a pair of monumental columns at the other. Low shelves and desks also divide the large spaces into more intimate areas while taller bookshelves line the outer walls under the windows.³¹

Paschalville is a typical example of the open plan branch library in Philadelphia except for the omission of the central rear wing. Here the plan is a horizontally oriented rectangle than a T shape. The cased opening with pocket door would allow one-third of the space to be partitioned for lectures or events, serving the same function as the rear ell in other Philadelphia Carnegie branches. The Philadelphia approach shares a number of features with Carnegie Libraries nationwide. In 1917 author Theodore Wesley Koch pointed out that a large room undivided by partitions became a defining feature of Carnegie branches across the country, as was providing a space for lectures. He notes that the lecture program was particularly successful in Philadelphia, where "each branch has a recognized clientele and lecturers are always sure of a good sized audience."³² In her study of the Carnegie Library, architectural historian Abigail Van Slyck discusses the contemporaneous struggle within the library profession over conflicting philosophies of

²⁸ "Library Branch Will Be Built," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 July 1913, 11.

²⁹ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Eighteenth Annual Report* (1913).

³⁰ Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes (15 April 1915), 51; History of the Paschalville Branch on the Free Library website at www.freelibrary.org/branches/history.cfm?loc=PAC

³¹ William Rau photographs in Free Library of Philadelphia, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (1914).

³² Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries*, (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1917), 86.

restricting access to reading material and newer ideals of community involvement.³³ Van Slyck also discusses the importance of children's rooms and specialized outreach to young readers as a new characteristic of libraries in this period.³⁴ Paschalville and other Philadelphia libraries demonstrate a progressive commitment to open stack branches and encouraging young patrons, but also a desire to control this public space. Here opposing impulses were balanced by stationing the main librarians' desk in front of the entrance where patrons could be observed by the staff. This arrangement was used in all of the Free Library Carnegie branches and continues today.

In the decades since its construction the Paschalville branch has continued to serve neighborhood library patrons with few substantial changes in form or detailing. Interior appointments such as the charging desk, shelving and patron tables have been changed over the years, as well as the floor covering and lighting during a 1962 renovation. Most of the Free Library branches received new linoleum and fluorescent lighting during a major modernization campaign in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Adding computer facilities was the focus of another, more recent, series of widespread upgrades at the Free Library branches.³⁵

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Paschalville Branch library is a symmetrical Georgian Revival structure with a formal axial entrance in a monumental pavilion at the center of the front façade. The Georgian Revival appearance is achieved mainly through the decorative details focused on the main entrance, the use of a Flemish bond brick pattern with glazed headers, and Neoclassical limestone cornice and parapet. The library stands one tall story high on a low raised basement. Except for the projecting entrance pavilion, the plan is a long rectangle facing 70th Street.

2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main block of this building is nine bays wide and three bays deep, with approximate dimensions of 84 by 54 feet.

2. Foundation: The Paschalville Branch sits approximately four feet above street grade on the 70th Street and Woodland Avenue façades. The foundation is lower toward the

³³ Abigail Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 122.

³⁴ See Van Slyck, "Chapter 6 – Reading: The Experience of Children as Library Users."

³⁵ Photograph of Paschalville Branch interior, c. 1966, Free Library of Philadelphia Central Branch, Director's Vault Collection.

rear southeast corner as the site slopes upward. The visible section of the foundation constructed of smoothly dressed blocks of limestone. The Roman numerals "MCMXIII" (1913) are carved into a recessed panel on the northwest corner of the foundation.

3. Walls: The walls are red brick with glazed headers laid in a Flemish bond. At the base of the walls there is a course of dressed limestone blocks with vertical scoring. A monumental pilaster is located between each window opening. The base of the pilaster is a limestone congé molding on top of a bolection molding. The shaft of the pilaster is brick projecting one course from the rest of the wall surface. The capital is again limestone with an ovolo section topped by a small cornice. Each pilaster sits on a shallow projecting plinth at the limestone foundation. There is a dressed limestone belt course that runs across the top of the pilasters and the window openings. Rectangular spandrel panels appear below each window opening. These flush panels have square limestone blocks at the corners connected by bricks laid in stretcher or soldier position. A bronze World War I memorial plaque is mounted at the center of the north façade facing Woodland Avenue. The bronze plaque is surrounded by wide limestone molding carved with stylized bundled rod and rosette motifs. At the top center is a high relief wreath framing a shield decorated with stars and stripes.

4. Structural system, framing: This library has load bearing masonry walls. The large trusses used to support the roof and span the open reading room spaces are hidden by the plaster ceiling.

5. Porches, stoops, etc.

Main entrance pavilion: The main entrance on 70th Street is indicated by a full-height entry pavilion executed in matching Flemish bond red brick with glazed headers. The entrance is accessed via two low granite steps originally flanked by piers. This granite stoop surrounds the pavilion. Access to the front door is up two additional low steps. The pavilion has pairs of limestone and brick pilasters like those on the walls flanking the entrance opening. The corners are notched and another full pilaster appears at the outer edge of each side elevation. A narrow window opening topped with a splayed jack arch and filled with a one over one wood sash is at the center of each entrance pavilion side elevation. An additional pilaster appears at the corner with the main façade and wraps across this seam. The robust brick and limestone entablature includes a limestone belt course topped by a brick frieze. The limestone cornice has a row of dentils under a complex projecting cornice molding with plain soffits. These features continue on the side façades of the pavilion. The brick parapet above has thick limestone coping and is pierced at the center third over the doorway by a limestone balustrade. A framed limestone tablet above the doorway in the frieze and between the inner pilasters contains the carved words "FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA," "PASCHALVILLE," AND "BRANCH" in three rows. Flanking the word "PASCHALVILLE" in the middle row is a carved Greek key design. The bottom edge of the limestone frame between the pilasters has a row of dentils.

A one-story flat roof brick entrance pavilion extends from the rear façade at the northeast corner. This entrance is accessed via a ramp. A straight run staircase at the rear façade near the southeast corner provides access to a subterranean basement doorway.

6. Chimney: A plain brick chimney projects from the rear façade near the southeast corner at the basement stairway.

7. Openings

a. Doorways and Doors: The main doorway is located inside the entrance pavilion described above. The monumental doorway is framed by wide limestone molding. A projecting limestone cornice above features a complex cornice supported by Classical mutule with guttae along the soffit. Below the cornice is an ovolo molding, a row of small dentils, and bound acanthus leaf motif in mid-relief. The wide molding surrounding the door opening has returns at the top corners and steps inward slightly to a shallow reveal. The upper section of the doorway is filled by a large transom with 24 square lights arranged in rows of four down and six across. The word "LIBRARY" is painted across the upper half of the transom. The two-leaf wood door with glazing in the top half and one raised rectangular panel in the bottom appears to be original.

b. Windows: The original windows are still intact but covered on the exterior by metal security grilles. The typical window is a large six over six wood sash set directly into the brick wall between pilasters. A narrow four over four version is located in the smaller bays next to the entrance pavilion. Each window is topped by a splayed brick jack arch and features a slightly projecting limestone sill that continues beyond the edges of the window to the flanking pilaster. The basement level windows are located partially below street grade in window wells. On the south façade these windows are a hopper-style sash with three lights arranged horizontally.

8. Roof: The Paschalville Branch has a flat or low pitched roof surrounded by a brick parapet with limestone coping. The parapet steps up at each corner. The limestone cornice with dentils continues from the entrance pavilion around the front and side façades.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: This branch library is a large rectangular open space with a vestibule in the entrance pavilion. The basement level was not accessible.

2. Stairway: The marble-lined entrance vestibule contains a flight of four marble steps leading to the main door. Information about other interior stairways was not available.

3. Flooring: The original hardwood floors are no longer visible or have been replaced. Square linoleum or vinyl tiles were installed during the 1962 renovation. Commercial grade carpet now covers the floors.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior decoration is Neoclassical in character. The walls and ceiling are plaster. There is a thick cornice at the top of the walls with a band

of small dentils. The ceiling has a series of beams creating rectangular and square coffers of various sizes. Thick muntins for original skylights are still visible in the center sections of the ceiling coffers, but the skylights have been covered from the exterior.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

The main entrance has a large transom with 18 lights arranged in a three down, six across pattern. The opening is topped by a wood cornice. The two leaf door has glazing in the top half. Wood panel doors probably leading to the basement staircase are located to either side.

A large rectangular cased opening is located north of the main entrance and originally equipped with pocket doors to partition this section of the room into a lecture space. The opening has a series of recessed rectangular panels across the top and monumental pilaster at either side of the opening. A partial pilaster is set into each corner. Each pilaster has a simple capital and one long recessed panel on the shaft. At the south side of the main entrance, that third of the room is demarcated by monumental columns at either side and a pilaster at each wall.³⁶

b. Windows: N/A

6. Decorative features and trim: Simple wood book shelves line the outer walls below the windows and are either original or similar. This arrangement was typical for the Philadelphia branch libraries and allowed maximum use of wall space for shelves while still allowing for considerable natural light.

7. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: It is likely that the original boiler system has been replaced. Vents are located along the outer walls below each window and below each book shelf. They are covered by simple metal grilles.

b. Lighting: Historic photographs indicate that a series of five metal chandeliers with round globes hung from the main room ceiling.³⁷ These electric chandeliers had eight sets of upward and downward fixtures arranged around an open hoop with s-curve arms and round glass globes. In addition, sconces with one upward and one downward round globe were mounted along the top edge of the outer wall book shelves. These fixtures are no longer extant. Fluorescent lighting was mounted to the bottom of the coffer beams during the 1962 renovation.³⁸ The current chandeliers each have one large, circular open top shade. A pair of cast iron sconces originally flanking the exterior entrance is still extant.

³⁶ Interior photograph published in Free Library of Philadelphia *Annual Report*, 1914.

³⁷ Interior photograph published in Free Library of Philadelphia *Annual Report*, 1914.

³⁸ Photograph of Paschalville Branch interior, c. 1966, Free Library of Philadelphia Central Branch, Director's Vault Collection.

c. Plumbing: The library would have been built with basic bathroom and kitchen facilities, which have now been upgraded.

D. Site: The library is on a long, narrow lot in a densely developed neighborhood of rowhouses. Most of the site is paved except for a narrow strip of lawn along 70th Street. The three mature sycamore trees along this streetscape could be the fledging trees visible in the 1914 Rau photograph. Woodland Avenue is an important secondary thoroughfare into Center City that still features mainly low-rise commercial structures.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: Drawings have not been located for this structure.

B. Early Views: William Rau photographs (one exterior and one interior) in the Free Library *Annual Report* for 1914.

C. Bibliography

The records of the Free Library of Philadelphia are located at the Central Library on Vine Street. The *Annual Reports* are located in the Municipal Reference Division, Cities P53-1154; and the Carnegie Fund Committee Minute Books are located in the Director's Vault (access by special permission).

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PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Paschalville Branch Library was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief, during summer 2007 as part of a larger initiative to record the Carnegie funded branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The project is sponsored by HABS in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, John A. Gallery, director; and the Free Library of Philadelphia, William J. Fleming, Administrative Services Director, and made possible through a Congressional appropriation for recording in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The historical reports were prepared by Lisa P. Davidson and Catherine C. Lavoie. Large-format photography was undertaken for HABS by Joseph Elliott.